

On the RISE Horizon

NEBRASKA STATE PROBATION

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What Does a RISE Specialist Do?

by Kari Rumbaugh, RISE Program Director



The Sky's the Limit!

The RISE Program has been serving Nebraska Probation officers in rural areas for almost three years. The RISE Program Specialists are devoted team members in eight districts. We all know RISE Specialists run groups and help probationers, but they do so much more than that.

Contacts Count:

Every RISE Specialist works and meets with probationers. When they meet with them, they are not only teaching

skills they can use for the rest of their lives, they are working on goals and case management focused directly on schooling and employment. This not only helps officers with busy caseloads, but also allows for probationers to receive support from someone other than an officer or judge.

Probation Publicity:

RISE Specialists are working hard to get the word out to the public regarding how this EBP focused program is reducing recidivism. RISE Specialists Charles Lieske, District #5 and Linda Lyon Black, District #12 were interviewed on local news stations. Plus, countless newspaper and Chamber of Commerce articles have been published. When talking

with your stakeholders don't forget to mention RISE.

Local Experts:

The RISE Specialist is a resource for all probation staff and probationers. They are experts in employment openings, local employer needs, GED programs, college funding and applications and high school success. This expertise helps motivate probationers and is available in the probation office.

The RISE Program continues to show success for the probationers it serves with an 85% success rate for participants not returning to probation within a year of completing the program. If you want to know more about the program talk to a RISE Specialist or sit in a RISE group. The sky's the limit!



RISE Program Goal

The **RISE** program will reduce recidivism through improving education and employment opportunities for probationers in rural areas of Nebraska.

Building Networking Partnerships:

by Michelle Mendez, RISE Program Specialist District #5

Making networking partnerships is a great way to help RISE participants outside groups. I have been able to help many RISE participants using these networking resources I have developed.

I have several partnerships and am building more. I have partnered with a tele-marketing agency. That

knows I am a support for them. If a probationer is interested in applying for a job, I take them to the agency, who know RISE is involved so they have me as a contact if problems arise.

I also have partnered with Goodwill: if someone needs clothes to wear to an interview, they provide a clothing

voucher as an incentive for those attending the RISE Program.

I have a partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation. We are sharing information with each other, for example my resource manual.

Partnerships are a way to go above and beyond groups to

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RISE Program Graduation Ceremonies

by Sharon Park, RISE Program Specialist District #11



Over 200 Probationers have Graduated from the RISE Program and NOT returned to probation!

“Participants will use these new-found skills to RISE to their FUTURE.”



Graduation ceremonies mark a transition from one stage in life to another. Graduation is an essential step in the RISE Program.

RISE Specialists have moved from simply presenting the probationer with a completion certificate to marking a success in their lives by holding graduation ceremonies for RISE participants.

During these ceremonies the certificate is given, other groups members are there to reflect on successes and struggles, and incentives are used to show appreciation.

I have had several graduates from the RISE program, for which this ceremony seems to give them a sense of accomplishment and pride.

I had a participant bring her 5-year-old daughter with her to the ceremony. After her Mom received her certificate of completion, her daughter threw her arms around her Mom's neck and said, "I am so proud of you Mommy!" It brought tears to everyone's eyes.

There is a "bond" that is shared with the participants who graduate together, much like the bond of high school students on graduation day. There are smiles, laughter and, much more important, hope.

These participants have worked hard to complete this program. Having some cake, ice cream and beverage on a day set aside to recognize this hard work means so much to them. In fact, after the ceremony I usu-

ally end up with 50% of the graduates telling me they would love to volunteer their time to help others just starting the program. They want to come and tell them this program "really works".

This is not just an accomplishment for the participant but also an accomplishment for myself. I feel pride and joy, as well as hope for the future of my community and the graduates.

Everyone is welcome at the RISE graduation ceremonies, so come support your probationers and the program.

Great Story:

by Charles Leiske, RISE Program Specialist District #5

One of the success stories from the Seward County area was sparked by Week Four's curriculum. During that week, we look at a wide variety of job-hunting techniques. Many of the probationers I have worked with think of classified ads and signs in store windows as the best way to find work. One of the options we discussed in this particular group was, "Broadcast Yourself," meaning tell everyone you know that you are looking for work. My probationer took that to heart

and proceeded to do just that.

Almost immediately, he heard back from a family friend that they needed some kitchen help in their restaurant. After clearing the opportunity with his probation officer, he began working part-time. Within a month of starting the new venture, he was bumped to full time. Not much later, he was given the responsibility of completing food orders from the distributor for the restaurant. And within three months, he was made kitchen manager.

He paid his fines and obligations off early with the extra income he was earning. This opportunity, within walking distance of his home, would have likely been missed without encouragement from the RISE program to think beyond the traditional job-search methods to which he had grown accustomed to.